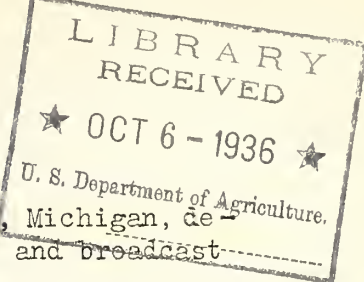


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HOME INCOMES FOR FARM WOMEN



A radio talk by Mrs. E. Moyer, Farm Woman, Ypsilanti, Michigan, delivered in the Home Demonstration Radio Hour, July 1, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 49 associate NBC radio stations.

In the spring of 1931 when the depression began to pinch the farmers of Michigan hardest, I was ready to welcome with pleasure any new ways of piecing out the family income. About that time, the Michigan State College Extension Service sent a specialist into our community to tell us of the Home Products Marketing Association which was being established. Inspired by her enthusiasm, I signed up as a member and began to take inventory of my culinary accomplishments.

We live in the extreme western part of the county in which Detroit is located, but on a back country road, which precludes all possibility of roadside marketing. My problem was how to sell the things I could make.

The National Farm and Garden Association whose membership is composed largely of well-to-do city women has several flourishing branches in our County. Each year they hold a Christmas Greens sale in Detroit about a week before Christmas where farm women's products are sold. This was the organization through which the Michigan Extension Service arranged for us farm women living off the main highway to market our products.

I decided on a modest program for this first year - some sliced sweet cucumber pickles, ginger pears and strawflowers for winter bouquets. Since that first year, I have added various things - red raspberry jam, quince preserves and jelly, spiced watermelon rind, currant and crabapple jelly and pickles of various kinds. If a customer asked for anything which was not on my marketing shelves, I have made an effort to fill such special orders.

The Extension Specialist inspected my kitchen and home early in the program, to make sure that these foods were being prepared under sanitary conditions. All of my products met the approval of the specialist and of our County Home Demonstration Agent before the sale. Both of these women helped me to standardize my products, suggested how to get good results, what the public wants, and tactfully insisted that all must conform to the standards. The label of the Home Products Marketing Association was the assurance of quality to the consumer.

The first year I was permitted to enter only a small number of jars in the Christmas Greens sale, but nearly all were sold. And one result was a substantial order from a lady in a suburb of Detroit for the next year. This encouraged and influenced me to continue my efforts with greater success. Although my receipts have not been large, my best year, 1933, brought in only somewhat over \$50.00 from about 240 jars of products, yet when you consider that many of the products made were from materials which would otherwise have gone to waste on the farm, and that one woman past fifty-five years old did all the work and kept up her home and community duties, perhaps it is not so trivial.

After 1931, the College Extension Service, was obliged to discontinue this State Marketing program for lack of funds, but our County Home Demonstration Agent helped me to continue. My products were disposed of at garden

sales, harvest festivals, flower shows and benefit bridge parties.

Of course I meet with discouragements. In that first year, just as I had nicely gotten into the swing of making those pickles, which take a week to complete, the hot dry weather killed the cucumber vines. Then we had no market for the winter bouquets. So many had invested in seeds and wire which was a loss, except for the pleasure derived from making several new flower acquaintances and having bouquets for our home and the homes of our friends.

There is much hard work involved in making such products, and sometimes the profits seem very meagre when one considers the many hours of work in the sun, and the hot kitchen. But there are also pleasures. The work of planting and tending growing things brings joy and the appreciation of the out-of-doors. I have learned more about the making of pickles and preserves than I ever knew before and there is a sense of satisfaction in being able to improve. Then too there is the contemplation of rows of attractive, tempting jars and the consciousness of achievement. I find, too, that the hard work is somewhat forgotten when the returns begin to come in and I was able to buy some of the personal things and household supplies I needed or to help out on some of the farm expenses. There are also pleasant contacts to be made with purchasers and some interesting friendships have been formed. It has been gratifying to me to be commended by the purchaser.

Taking it as a whole the project has proved both a pleasant and profitable experience.

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